

The Dulles Dilemma

THE CASE of Dulles: A Biography of Leonard, Allen and John Foster Dulles and Their Family Network by Leonard Mosley is not yet a "case" in the legal sense, and might never become one, since James O. Wade, publisher of The Dial Press/James Wade Books, is understandably reluctant at this point to discuss the possibility of litigation. But Jim Wade tells me he'd like to see "at least one or two" of the alleged 900 instances of inaccuracy that Eleanor Dulles, sister of Allen and John Foster Dulles, has charged the book with. So far, they've received no such list of errors, only the press release issued by Universal Public Relations of 441 Lexington Avenue in New York, headlined "Eleanor Dulles Comments on New Book About Dulles Family." In the press release, Ms. Dulles is quoted as commenting, "When fiction masquerades as history, the reader should be given some warning," and the press release goes on to say that she "has compiled a list of errors nearly as long as the book itself. On most pages where she is quoted, a correct quotation is followed by a number of incorrect quotations. She has conveyed this information to the author with the hope that the publisher will correct the many errors should further printings be planned."

In a Q & A interview in *The Washington Star*, Eleanor Dulles specified that the errors were "hundreds. Counting the inconsequential ones, perhaps as many as

900."

Jim Wade now steps into the fray. "We can not stand by and ignore the alleged 900 'errors' that E. L. Dulles claims are in the book, nor can we ignore the allegations of errors by Professor Richard Ullman and John Bartlow Martin in their respective reviews in the *New York Times Book Review* (2/26/78) and the *Chicago Tribune Book World* (2/26/78)." Wade also points out that a *New York Times* piece by Herbert Mitgang (3/9) says that Mosley describes the former C.I.A. director as a "libertine." That word is never used in the book.

Eleanor Dulles' allegation (in the press release) states that "the fiction continues throughout the book to the final pages, when the author describes a conference which supposedly took place between Foster Dulles and the President in 1960 about the Bay of Pigs project—one year after Foster's death." Mosley actually wrote that the Foster Dulles-Eisenhower conversation took place in 1959 (when Foster was still alive), but that Allen revealed the conversation to Richard Bissell in 1960. As to the rebuttal of the book reviews, publishers and authors are always writing letters to the editors, and will no doubt go on doing so, but in the case of *Dulles: A Biography*, a full selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, and therefore a heavy-money book for a political biography, the defense is rather more defensive than usual. □

—Leonore Fleischer